



The REHOBOTH Foodie

The answers for your taste buds' never-ending question. **Where should I eat?**
Follow *The Foodie* daily at RehobothFoodie.com

Meet Bob

My goal is to promote local dining while remaining honest and impartial. I don't gush unless a place deserves it, and I don't pull punches, either. I don't accept ads from restaurants; I dine as anonymously as I can (sometimes I even wear a disguise) and pay full price during the review process. With so many good places to eat around here, it just doesn't make sense to waste the calories – or the money – on anything less.

THE REVIEW

CAFÉ AZAFRÁN

The Foodie awards it:



Let's start this one off with a quiz.

Question 1: Does anyone remember the polka-dotted Libby's Restaurant ("pancakes with personality") on Fenwick Island?

Question 2: How many remember the Libby's at the corner of Rte. 24 and Coastal Highway in Rehoboth Beach? (Hint: Crabby Dick's is there now.)

Both Libby's are now history, but they gave rise to several present-day eateries owned and operated by the Steele family. When the Rehoboth Libby's morphed into

the Lamp Post Inn, a young Richard Steele was in the kitchen, earning his stripes as a chef and future restaurateur. When the Lamp Post eventually closed, Richard and his brother Mark opened Café Azafrán in Lewes. It was an instant hit, and the brothers thought the concept might be welcome in Rehoboth Beach. Yes, it certainly was, and still is.

Café Azafrán's downtown Rehoboth Beach spot is now the only Café Azafrán location, after they closed the Lewes location in March 2014. But note the careful wording: There's a happy catch that will be revealed! Read on.

Kitchen talent runs in the Steele family, and feedback about Café Azafrán has been consistently positive. The name is the Spanish word for saffron, the bright-orange and extremely expensive spice derived from the crocus plant. And it is absolutely necessary for making good paella.

One of the keys to the success of Café Azafrán is the selection of small plates, aka tapas. With choices to satisfy carnivores and vegetarians alike, it's easy to make a meal out of two or three. And, indeed, Tapas Tasting Night specials offer a great selection of diminutive →



PHOTOGRAPHY
BY TODD DUDEK



PAELLA IN THE SKY: THE FOODIE SAYS THAT THE THEATRICS OF PAELLA NIGHT ALONE JUSTIFY A VISIT TO CAFÉ AZAFRÁN IN REHOBOTH, THOUGH IT'S NOT THE ONLY STAR OF THE SHOW.

THE REVIEW CONTINUED

goodies at a reasonable price — even for the ocean block of Baltimore Avenue. Two of the Rehoboth Foodie’s pick hits include the short-rib sliders with caramelized onions, and the haricots verts (a French green bean extravaganza that involves bleu cheese, butter and hazelnuts. Beware: It’s addictive!). Another must-get is Café Azafrán’s veal sausage: simply delicious, surrounded by plump cannellini beans prepared baked-bean-style.

I have a similar reaction to the ricotta and spinach gnocchi (lubricated with sage butter and topped with pecorino cheese). Honorable mention must also go to the La Mancha plate, replete with a sandy brown Manchego, spicy chorizo, jamon Serrano (expensive Spanish ham) and Romesco salsa (a Catalonian preparation with tomatoes, peppers, toasted almonds and hazelnuts). In other words, pretty much everything is good.

And then there’s Paella Night! This

bit of culinary theater combines good eatin’ with a cooking display worthy of anything on Food Network. Reservation-only ticketholders (it sells out quickly!) gather around Richard’s 48” paella pan to watch him build this traditional Spanish feast from scratch. The evening is fun from the moment the oil starts shimmering to when Steele tosses in the scallops and shrimp to finish the dish. It happens on Sundays and Wednesdays during the peak of the season — again, by reservation only.

Thursday nights come with a value-added in the form of singing bartender Holly Lane, accompanied on the keyboard by the talented and versatile John Francis Flynn. She takes orders, mixes drinks, chops fruit, rings up checks, pops tops, swipes credit cards and pours wine — all without missing a beat. She and Flynn have some magical connection through the ether that keeps them in sync. It’s a

sight to behold and to be heard.

Okay, now for the promised reveal: As of a couple of weeks ago, the Steeles have returned to Lewes! After Patty’s carryout vacated the old Half Full spot next door to Azafrán’s original Market Street location, Richard fulfilled his dream of returning his first concept to Lewes. He’s calling it Olive & Oats, and the menu is almost identical to the original breakfast/lunch-centric fare that catapulted Lewes’ Café Azafrán into the mainstream so many years ago. Bagels, frittatas, pastries, salads, wraps and panini dominate the menu, along with Richard’s legendary baked oatmeal.

Café Azafrán is in downtown Rehoboth Beach at 18 Baltimore Ave. Olive & Oats is located at 113 W. Market Street in Lewes. I’ll say it once again, then you’re on your own: Call for reservations — especially for Rehoboth’s Paella Night: (302) 227-8100. Bon Appétit! 🍽️

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The REHOBOTH Foodie

BREAKING CHEWS

The Latest Dish From RehobothFoodie.com!

Lots of whining and wishful thinking in the Rehoboth area has finally brought about **Minh's Bistro** – our first Vietnamese restaurant! By the time you read this they will either be open or very close to it. Make yourself known to owner (and professional actor/singer) **Thin Pham**. He named the little spot after his youngest brother and plans on serving a wide array of Vietnamese favorites. Minh's Bistro is next door to the Rosenfeld's Jewish Deli #2 in the new Schell building at Rte. 24 in Rehoboth Beach, across from Royal Farms.

Though we mourn the demise of Meg Hudson's Lula Brazil, the new **G Cask & Kitchen** has lit up the storied Cloud 9 building in the fourth block of Rehoboth Ave. Managing partner **Karly Gamaitoni** tells RehobothFoodie.com that her new restaurant offers an American menu with some Mediterranean flavors thrown in. Executive Chef Dennis Kuc is in the kitchen. BCG Management Group, of which Karly is a part, will offer late-night dancing with a greatly expanded wine list. G Cask & Kitchen is open every day 5:30-9:30 p.m., with dancing and cocktails until 1 a.m. Brunch on Saturday and Sunday is from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Reservations are accepted, at 302-278- 7677.

Look closely next to the Safeway on Coastal Highway, and you will see the tiny, soon-to-open **Miyagi Ramen Bar**. Co-owner and host **Jeong Hoon Kim** (Remember him? The tall, silky-haired and rather inscrutable front-of-house host at **Saketumi** in Rehoboth?) is pleased to bring one of his favorite, entirely house-made dishes to the Cape region. There will be a selection of proteins to combine with your noodles, along with an extensive selection of veggie-only items. Kim made such an impression on Saketumi's customers that owner Tammy Wang partnered with him on this exciting venture into noodledom. Prices will range from \$8 to about \$15. Kim chimes in: "It will be the essential neighborhood eatery."

Josh Mellinger of LaVida Lekker LLC is overseeing the opening of a **Makin' Whoopie Pies** franchise on the ocean block of Rehoboth Avenue where America's Pie Pizza used to be. The concept has been well received so far. The freshly made DIY pies look good. The Rehoboth Foodie will, of course, have to investigate. (Note that LaVida Lekker LLC is not affiliated with La Vida Hospitality Group here in Delaware.)

People who love long lines already know that **Agave**, the popular Mexican tequila restaurant and bar at 137 Second St. in Lewes has finally reopened after a long and protracted remodel. Remember: Go early or late! This is one of the more popular eateries in Lewes, and even with the remodel, it's still not all that big. Lines can be long during dinnertime, but trust me: The guacamole is worth the wait. 🌮

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THE LATEST DISH



SLOW DOWN, KICK BACK AND
ENJOY THE BIG CHILL BEACH LIFESTYLE

PHOTOS COURTESY LA VIDA HOSPITALITY

The Umbrella Deck at La Vida Hospitality Group and the Delaware State Parks' Big Chill Beach Club opened on Memorial Day weekend, and this high-tech, family-friendly rooftop restaurant at the Seashore State Park south-side beach area is in full swing. La Vida Hospitality Group worked closely with the Delaware State Parks people to make the additions

environmentally friendly while adding an enjoyable complement to the existing beach experience. Even in the rain, the place has been packed!

The centerpiece of the project is the \$400,000 Umbrella Room. La Vida Hospitality boss Josh Grapski discovered this Austrian-made structure on a European ski trip. It made an immediate impression. The amazing piece of technology (delivered by ship in three

massive containers) seats guests in total comfort around a circular bar with a 360-degree view of the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian River Inlet & Bay and the Indian River Inlet Suspension Bridge — bathed in cobalt blue at nighttime.

The motorized, 36' diameter umbrella can be opened or closed (quite dramatically, by the way) depending on the weather. Speaking of weather, the structure can withstand 110 mph winds.

BIG CHILL • CONTINUES ON PAGE 130



FOODIE ON THE ROAD



MILLSBORO'S WEE TOUCH O' ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & IRELAND ALL IN ONE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT L. GURSKY

The stately Delaware Trust Bank building in Millsboro is no longer accepting deposits, but satisfied customers are still making daily withdrawals in the form of unique menu items with an English/Irish/Scottish flair. Yes, I am aware that I stretched that metaphor about as far as it could be stretched, but it shouldn't detract from The Pint's popularity as a neighborhood watering hole touting tasty tidbits like Cock a Leekie, The O'Connor, the Thomas O'Malley and the decidedly Irish boxty.

This is restaurant number two for 1776 Steakhouse co-owner Tom Holmes. He, along with talented chef and business

partner Tammy Mozingo opened The Pint in 2013. Their first foray into pub-grub casual has been a great success. For my first couple of visits back then, I was able to slip in unnoticed (but not so much anymore). I sat at the bar and started with the Loch Ness. The Pint's version of crab dip in a sourdough bowl got an A+ in the spice department. I was intrigued. A second visit yielded the Irish Stew. This stick-to-your-ribs recipe is loaded with onions, potatoes, parsley, carrots and ground lamb, deliciously savory with the spice throttled back just enough to let the lamb shine through.

One of the stars of the appetizer show at The Pint is the Dublin Cakes. These remind me of my mother's ham

croquettes: a go-to dish during her annual post-Easter "What the heck am I going to do with all this ham?" cooking spree. But rather than leftover pork lovingly enrobed in a mild béchamel, kitchen boss Darius Davis stuffs them with ground corned beef and swiss cheese, dredges them in seasoned bread crumbs and fries 'em up to a golden crunch. With the Thousand Island dressing on the side, it's sort of like a reuben minus the sandwich part. Order them to share.

Another must-get are the equally filling Scottish Eggs. The two massive orbs (also eminently shareable) are nestled in frizzled onions. (It would be nice to put the frizzles on the top, so they would stay crispy.) That being said, it's all about

the egg: semi-hard-boiled, wrapped in a thin shell of sausage, dredged in a well-spiced something and then fried. Whole-grain mustard adds the necessary acidic kick. In a word: delicious. You can make a meal out of these.

The Cheshire Chicken reminded us of shepherd's pie but without the mashed potatoes. Pulled chicken, caramelized onions and mushrooms in gravy are presented *en casserole*, topped with roasted garlic potatoes and bacon bits. Think deconstructed bacon/cheese potato skins — but with chicken. It's deliciously seasoned, very rich and well worth the \$14.95 tariff. Don't plan to eat again for a while. Grilled Bangers & Mash and Hobbit Pie keep the whole theme going. The mains are often accompanied by a tasty (and not too dry) Irish soda bread.

Generously portioned sandwiches include the patty melt with two (count 'em, TWO) patties on marble rye; the Molly McGuire (a 10-oz. bacon cheeseburger by any other name) and The O'Connor (a BBQ-chicken bacon cheeseburger — all four basic food groups!).

The thickest Irish accent in the house has got to be the boxty: A potato pancake made from mashed potatoes and grated raw potato — sort of like a hash brown/latke pancake. Really, what's not to love? In Millsboro, they get the Pint-like twist in three varieties. The Leprechaun is my favorite, with olives, sausage, 'shrooms and swiss. But don't overlook the Pierogi and the Thomas O'Malley, either. I'll let you explore those on your own.

The hulking bank vault is still there, and if the tucked-inside table is available, go for it. It's sort of fun, and don't worry: There's a doorstop to keep you from being trapped with Lucy until Monday morning, when Mr. Mooney arrives for work.

The Pint is located at 303 Main St., just past Georgia House and Blue Water Grill as you drive east through Millsboro. Front-of-house manager Candace Fiorentino keeps things hoppin' year-round: 3:30 p.m.-10 p.m. Monday thru Wednesday; 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Thursday thru Saturday, and 3:30 p.m.-9 p.m. on Sunday. Visit them online at ThePintPub.com. Going with a group? Call them at 302-934-5822. 🍷



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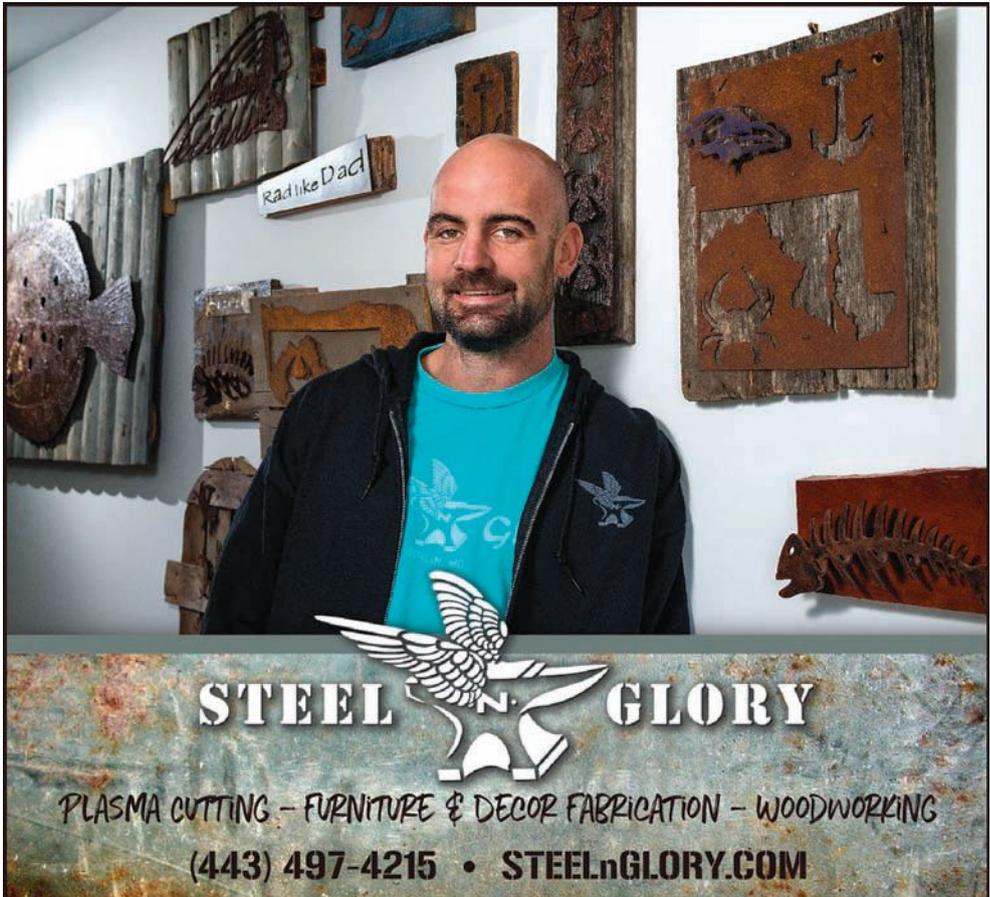
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Adjacent to the elevated restaurant deck there is a tented and floored wedding/event venue with the same panoramic view of the amazing natural resource.

Food-and-beverage service is executed under the watchful eyes of La Vida Hospitality's Josh Grapski and Rock 'n' Roll Chef to the Stars Billy Lucas. Taco Reho boss Lucas' SoCal-inspired fare reflects a beachy theme with uncomplicated food that's easy to take out or enjoy on the deck. Creative menu items include a selection of colorful ceviches, freshly made tacos, jerk chicken, tuna poke, steak frites and Billy's famous Carne Fries, just to name a few. There's even a raw bar adjacent to the umbrella room.

La Vida Hospitality and the Delaware State Parks gambled that this first-of-its-kind public/private partnership would attract even more visitors to the beautiful Indian River Inlet. We bet this endeavor will pay off handsomely for both. The Big Chill Beach Club is currently open for lunch and dinner, from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m., every day in season. 🍷

THE BIG CHILL BEACH CLUB 302-402-5300 BigChillBeachClub.com



LIFE-SAVING MUSEUM • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

INSIDE THE MUSEUM

Part of the museum's mission is highlighting the role of the Life-Saving Station's "surfmens," whose job it was to take on dangerous ocean rescues. To that end, one of the treasures of the museum collection is an authentic surf boat, on loan from the Smithsonian. It would have been used in the 1920s and '30s to rescue mariners from sinking ships.

Before the town's inlet opened in 1933, men on a rescue mission would have arduously hauled the 2.5-ton boat on a wide-wheeled cart through sand and launched into the shore break, no matter the weather.

Upstairs, a narrow staircase leads to more exhibit space and to a cramped museum office. Several lifetimes ago, these areas housed the quarters and washroom for the keeper of the Life-Saving Station. Now, they showcase the history of surfing and surf culture of OC.

You'll also find an exhibit about life on the Boardwalk during the first half of the 20th century. That one includes the famous Laughing Sal, a grotesque, retired funhouse clown whose cackling laughter can still be heard with the push of a little red button. And in June, the museum launched an exhibit on the history of Native American life in our area.

Exhibitions don't end at the museum walls. Beginning July 3, staff and volunteers will offer free programs right outside, on the Boardwalk, on a range of topics, including knot-tying, sharks and the Beach Patrol, among others.

THE MUSEUM'S FUTURE

In the next few years, museum officials are hoping to expand the museum into a second building, Howard said.

The proposed two-story expansion would accommodate existing exhibits, as well as an expanded gift shop, new office space, classrooms and more. Then, with exhibits cleared out of the old station building, they could restore the property to what it would have looked like in the late 1800s, Howard said.

For now, the current museum remains a first-class amenity for Ocean City tourists.

"Hundreds of people pass by here every day in the summer. If they would just come on in, they would add another dimension to their beach experience," she said. 🌊

OCEAN CITY LIFE-SAVING STATION MUSEUM 410-289-4991 OCMuseum.org